

PAW 1839

Chapter 1839

In the past few days, the office has been discussing the new county party committee complex. The inspection has been completed, the construction quality is up to standard, and they are about to move into the new office. Everyone is excited; they've had enough of the old office building—leaking roofs, dampness, poor sound insulation, etc. The building is on the verge of collapsing, and they work in such a dangerous environment every day. Who wouldn't want to move to a new place? Since the previous county party secretary, Li Gui'an, proposed this construction project, everyone has been looking forward to it. They've been waiting for over a year.

"Finally, we're moving."

"I've had enough of this damn place."

"Haha, I heard the new complex is luxurious."

"I've heard that too, but I've never seen it. What's it actually like?"

"Although it's a bit out of the way, they say it's built like a palace. Have you been to the Forbidden City? It's kind of like that, really grand."

"Is that for real?"

"Yeah, we're in for a treat."

"It's so extravagant. I hope nothing goes wrong."

"Other nearby counties are doing the same thing, so it should be fine."

"Right, I went to that county's party committee complex the last time I was on a business trip. It's unbelievable—their government office building has twenty to thirty floors, and the land area is six or seven times bigger than ours. People who know it realize it's just a county, but others might think it's a provincial government building! I've never seen what a provincial party committee complex looks like, but I guess it's something like that. If neighboring counties can afford it, we can build something even better, right? I heard we're moving tomorrow. I can't wait!"

"Yes, the higher-ups said we're gradually moving over tomorrow."

"Let's get to work then. There's sure to be a lot to do today, such as packing up files and office supplies. With so many things, we'll probably have to move everything ourselves tomorrow."

In the morning, the office was filled with these kinds of conversations. You could see the excited expressions on everyone's face, even some county leaders. But the only one who looked different was Dong Xuebing.

Upstairs.

In the secretary's office.

Dong Xuebing sat inside, frowning as he sipped his tea. He had been like this for the past few days—feeling unmotivated and uncomfortable, constantly distracted, as if something was weighing on his mind. The reason was, of course, the new county party committee complex. He knew it was a waste of the people's money and resources. He knew it was built using the sweat and blood of the common people, and it shouldn't have been such a waste. It had already crossed the line of acceptable policy, yet Dong Xuebing still decided to move everyone in tomorrow. He made it reluctantly, under pressure from various external factors. It was a decision he didn't want to make, and it made him uncomfortable and felt like he was betraying his conscience. If it had been in the past, he would have investigated everything thoroughly. Such a large sum would surely strain the county's finances, and he had no idea where the funds came from or which budget was cut to make up the difference. But now, Li Gui'an had left the scene, and Dong Xuebing was left feeling... frustrated.

In the afternoon, after work.

Dong Xuebing didn't leave. He stayed to work overtime, dealing with a backlog of documents. Many things needed his attention, and that's how it had been for the past few days. Although Zhang Dongfang had been discharged from the hospital two days ago, Dong Xuebing still had much to do. But he had no reason to rush home. Working overtime didn't bother him at all.

Dong Xuebing didn't leave.

Naturally, Su Yan, the secretary, couldn't leave either.

Although Dong Xuebing didn't say anything, Su Yan could tell what was happening and didn't ask any questions. Instead, he quietly made a phone call to order two meals. When the food arrived, Su Yan brought one to Dong Xuebing's office, saying, "Secretary, I've bought some food. Please eat first."

Dong Xuebing nodded, put down his pen, and rubbed his brow. "Alright, let's eat together."

Su Yan placed the food on the desk, politely said a few words, and then sat down. He was becoming increasingly like a secretary and had gotten used to Dong Xuebing's personality and habits. Fortunately, Dong Xuebing wasn't difficult to understand. If he had been, Su Yan would have taken much longer to adapt to the role. Dong Xuebing was simple—his personality was straightforward, his habits were uncomplicated, and his temper was mild. Su Yan had a good rapport with him, and the adjustment had gone smoothly.

After the meal, it was already dark, past 7 PM.

Dong Xuebing glanced at the clock and said, "Xiao Su, you should head home now. It's getting late. I'll stay longer to finish some things, but you can go. Be careful on the road."

Su Yan understood his temperament. Some leaders are polite just for the sake of it, but Dong Xuebing's politeness is genuine. He truly cared about his subordinates, so when Dong Xuebing told him to go home and rest, he meant it. Su Yan didn't pretend to be stubborn. "Alright, you take care as well." Before leaving, Su Yan cleaned the empty disposable food containers and chopsticks from the desk.

Dong Xuebing gave one last instruction, "Tomorrow, we'll be moving to the new county party committee complex. You should come in a bit earlier. I won't be here so early. If anything comes up, you can contact me anytime."

"Okay." Su Yan replied, understanding that Dong Xuebing wasn't in the mood for tomorrow's events.

Once Su Yan left, Dong Xuebing finished handling the last documents. He stretched, then looked out at the starry sky. He shook his head slightly. For some reason, over the past few days, a voice in his mind told him that they shouldn't move into the new county party committee complex. Dong Xuebing felt uneasy about it. Perhaps it was some sort of mental aversion. He didn't demand much from others or his subordinates as long as they preserved the bottom line of serving

the people. He could turn a blind eye to small mistakes. But when it came to himself, Dong Xuebing was very strict. This had been ingrained in him since childhood by his parents' education.

Still not at ease!

Still, his conscience is uneasy!

Dong Xuebing turned around and walked back to his desk. He opened a drawer and took out a few evening newspapers from earlier that afternoon, some from the neighboring counties and others from large media outlets in the city and province. Su Yan had placed these in the drawer during their meeting that afternoon, as was his daily routine. Dong Xuebing had specifically asked him to do this.

Let's check the situation for tomorrow.

Otherwise, I might not be able to sleep tonight!

Dong Xuebing was determined to look at tomorrow's situation—he wanted to know how the officials would react and whether the people were gossiping behind their backs. He didn't have much time left before his appointment was up. The past few days, especially during the rescue mission, had used much of his time. Otherwise, how could Dong Xuebing have moved so quickly on that steep, muddy slope? He relied on special abilities like BACK and STOP to help him. So, now, there wasn't much time left for him, but even with a little, he could still make progress. Forward might take longer, but a minute could be enough to advance a day's work. What Dong Xuebing needed was the news about tomorrow.

Closing his eyes, concentrating, and focusing, Dong Xuebing opened his eyes again and then reached for the drawer. FORWARD!

One second...

Half a second...

One minute...

FORWARD deactivated

When Dong Xuebing opened the drawer again, it was empty—there were no newspapers or anything else inside. He paused for a moment but didn't find it surprising. Perhaps he had advanced too much time, and just like today, when Su Yan put the newspapers inside, Dong Xuebing had already taken them out by the time tomorrow arrived. Therefore, there was nothing in the drawer at this time.

Dong Xuebing tried again.

FORWARD for forty seconds!

If he advanced forty seconds, it would be just when the afternoon newspapers were delivered.

However, after trying again, Dong Xuebing opened the drawer but found it still empty.

He furrowed his brow. What's going on? Why is there still no newspaper? Did Su Yan forget to put it in the drawer? Or maybe, since he was already in the office then, Su Yan just handed the papers directly to him?

Dong Xuebing picked up his phone and called Su Yan.

"Hello, Xiao Su. Are you downstairs now? I have something to tell you. In the future, you don't need to ask me whether I'm here or not. Just place the morning and evening newspapers directly in the drawer where I keep them."

Su Yan didn't quite understand why Dong Xuebing was calling about such a small matter, but he responded, "Alright, I understand, Secretary."

"Okay, that's all. Go home early," Dong Xuebing hung up the phone.

After ending the call, Dong Xuebing decided to try again, using his little remaining time.

FORWARD for forty seconds again— but once more, when he opened the drawer, it was empty.

This time, a sense of unease crept into Dong Xuebing's heart. He suddenly had a bad feeling. He had just talked to Su Yan and had consciously forced himself to remember to put the newspapers back in the drawer after reading them. That drawer should have the newspapers by now, including the morning paper. But now, it was empty. This made Dong Xuebing start to overthink things.

Did Su Yan forget?

That couldn't be the case. Dong Xuebing had specifically told him, and Su Yan did not forget such things. He shouldn't even be working as a secretary if he had forgotten.

Was it that Dong Xuebing hadn't put them back himself after reading?

No, he trusted himself enough not to forget such a thing.

Or had the FORWARD ability stopped working?

That was impossible! Dong Xuebing had used FORWARD many times and had always been accurate. There couldn't be any mistakes!

The only remaining explanation was that something had happened tomorrow that had caused Su Yan not to put the newspapers in the drawer, or maybe something had happened on Dong Xuebing's end that had caused him not to return the newspapers after reading. Another possibility was that the newspapers hadn't been delivered yet.

But all three of these scenarios seemed almost impossible.

If any of them were true, it would mean that something big would happen tomorrow.